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REPLY

The Examiner rejected claims 1-10, 12-13, 16-26, 29, 32-34, 37-39 and 42 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Carr.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1 and 40-41 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Noe, et al.

The Examiner also rejected claims 11-12, 14 and 35-36 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Carr in view of Stelmach.

The Examiner also rejected claims 2 and 42 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Carr in view of McDevitt et al.

Carr (5,765,252) discloses a finger brush having bristles 16 and bumps or dimples 38. The bristles 16 include a coating formed of a layer 26 of dehydrated toothpaste.

Stelmach (6,116,252) discloses a finger mounted toothbrush including a lanyard. Dental powered or paste is either added or already present in the tooth cleaning bristles 4.

Noe et al (6,119,296) discloses a toothbrush having a cleaning device, template, on one side. A template 90 is placed in a pocket 88 that may include mouthwash 92 or some other similar liquid.

McDevitt et al (6,721,987) discloses an oral cleaning device fit onto a human finger. Various additives can be applied, such as dental agents, flavoring agents, or anti-microbial agents.

An essential feature of the present invention is that the main body is configured to receive a dispersible substance which is naturally dispersed during use and that the main body is impregnated with the dispersible substance. The main body is covered by a plurality of bristles with the inner main body disbursing the dispersible substance slowly through the plurality

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of bristles. A further essential feature of the present invention is that the tooth cleaning device comprises engaging means shaped to engage the human tongue.

Carr does not disclose a main body impregnated with a dispersible substance as recited in claim 1. Therefore, Carr can not anticipate claim 1. Carr discloses a finger brush having bristles that are coated with a layer of dehydrated toothpaste. There is no disclosure that the interior surface or portion of the finger brush disclosed in Carr is impregnated with any dispersible substance. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection of claim 1 as being anticipated by Carr cannot be sustained.

Similarly the Examiner's rejection of claims 1 and 40-41 as being anticipated by Noe et al cannot be sustained. Noe et al does not disclose a main body impregnated with a dispersible substance and exteriorly covered by a plurality of bristles and that is shaped to engage the human tongue. Noe et al discloses a toothbrush having a cleaning device, or template, on one side that may be placed in a packet that may include mouthwash or some other similar substance. There is no disclosure in Noe et al of an interior main body that is impregnated with a dispersible substance. In Noe et al the exterior surface of the template 90 is coated with mouthwash 92, but there is no disclosure of absorption or impregnation of an inner main body. Therefore, claim 1 cannot be anticipated by Noe et al. In the present invention, as recited in claim 1, a main body is positively claimed that is configured to receive a dispersible substance. There is no corresponding main body disclosed in Noe et al.

Additionally, the rejection by the Examiner of claims 11-12, 14, and 35-26 as being unpatentable or obvious over Carr in view of Stelmach cannot be sustained. Carr does not disclose the essential features as recited in independent claim 1; that a main body covered with a plurality of bristles is impregnated with a

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dispersible substance. Stelmach discloses a powder or paste placed on the tooth-cleaning bristles and does not disclose an interior main body impregnated with a dispersible substance. Therefore, even if the disclosures of Carr and Stelmach were combined it would not result in the present invention. The dependent claims 11-12, 14, and 35-36 therefore also contain essential limitations not disclosed in any of the references cited, and therefore should be allowable.

Similarly, the rejection of claims 2 and 42 as being unpatentable or obvious over Carr in view of McDevitt et al cannot be sustained. McDevitt et al discloses an oral cleaning device that fits onto a human finger. McDevitt et al specifically teaches a barrier that is liquid-impervius but vapor-permeable so that the finger of a user is more comfortable during cleaning. McDevitt et al also discloses that various additives can be applied to the wipe to aid in the cleaning process. McDevitt et al, similar to Carr, does not disclose an inner main body covered with a plurality of bristles wherein the inner main body is impregnated with a dispersible substance. Additionally, the teaching of McDevitt in disclosing a barrier that is liquid-impervius would teach away for the use of an inner main body containing a disburseable substance, as the disburseable substance would be unable to disburse. Accordingly, claims 2 and 42 should be patentable.

None of the references cited by the Examiner disclose the essential features of the present invention as recited in claim 1, specifically a main body that has a plurality of bristles where the interior main body is impregnated with a dispersible substance. In all of the references cited by the Examiner the bristles, which are formed on the exterior surface, are coated with a substance, such as dehydrated toothpaste as disclosed in Carr. While an exterior coating of material as disclosed in Carr

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is useful, often the coating is worn away or dispersed quickly when placed in the mouth. The present invention has the advantage that an inner main body is impregnated, or absorbs, a dispersible substance that is covered with a plurality of bristles. Therefore the present invention will slowly disperse the dispersible substance from the main body so as to cause the substance to slowly migrate through the plurality of external bristles. In this way the dispersible substance is more evenly dispersed over a greater length of time than in the devices disclosed in the referenced cited by the Examiner. Accordingly the present invention advances the art and makes for a more useful tooth-cleaning device.

Additionally new claim 43 has been added to more particularly recite the present invention. New claim 43 specifically recites an inner main body and a dispersible substance impregnated within said inner main body

It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the present application and forward the Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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